

TOM BLILEY, VIRGINIA, CHAIRMAN

W.J. "BILLY" TAUZIN, LOUISIANA  
MICHAEL G. OXLEY, OHIO  
MICHAEL BILIRAKIS, FLORIDA  
DAN SCHAEFER, COLORADO  
JOE BARTON, TEXAS  
J. DENNIS HASTERT, ILLINOIS  
FRED UPTON, MICHIGAN  
CLIFF STEARNS, FLORIDA  
BILL PAXON, NEW YORK  
PAUL E. GILLMOR, OHIO  
SCOTT L. KLUG, WISCONSIN  
JAMES C. GREENWOOD, PENNSYLVANIA  
MICHAEL D. CRAPO, IDAHO  
CHRISTOPHER COX, CALIFORNIA  
NATHAN DEAL, GEORGIA  
STEVE LARGENT, OKLAHOMA  
RICHARD BURR, NORTH CAROLINA  
BRIAN P. BILBRAY, CALIFORNIA  
ED WHITFIELD, KENTUCKY  
GREG GANSKE, IOWA  
CHARLIE NORWOOD, GEORGIA  
RICK WHITE, WASHINGTON  
TOM COBURN, OKLAHOMA  
RICK LAZIO, NEW YORK  
BARBARA CUBIN, WYOMING  
JAMES E. ROGAN, CALIFORNIA  
JOHN SHIMKUS, ILLINOIS

JOHN D. DINGELL, MICHIGAN  
HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIFORNIA  
EDWARD J. MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS  
RALPH M. HALL, TEXAS  
RICK BOUCHER, VIRGINIA  
THOMAS J. MANTON, NEW YORK  
EDOLPHUS TOWNS, NEW YORK  
FRANK PALLONE, JR., NEW JERSEY  
SHERROD BROWN, OHIO  
BART GORDON, TENNESSEE  
ELIZABETH FURSE, OREGON  
PETER DEUTSCH, FLORIDA  
BOBBY L. RUSH, ILLINOIS  
ANNA G. ESHOO, CALIFORNIA  
RON KLINK, PENNSYLVANIA  
BART STUPAK, MICHIGAN  
ELIOT L. ENGEL, NEW YORK  
THOMAS C. SAWYER, OHIO  
ALBERT R. WYNN, MARYLAND  
GENE GREEN, TEXAS  
KAREN MCCARTHY, MISSOURI  
TED STRICKLAND, OHIO  
DIANA DEGETTE, COLORADO

JAMES E. DERDERIAN, CHIEF OF STAFF

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Commerce**  
**Room 2125, Rayburn House Office Building**  
**Washington, DC 20515-6115**

BLIC  
Z

**OPENING STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE TOM BLILEY  
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND POWER**

**HEARING ON H.R. 629, THE TEXAS LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE  
DISPOSAL COMPACT CONSENT ACT**  
May 13, 1997

When Congress passed the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Policy Act in 1980, it was part of a broader policy decision that the States would be responsible for the disposal of low-level radioactive waste, while the Federal government would accept the responsibility for disposing of high-level wastes.

This Committee has been heavily involved in implementing both programs ever since. Just weeks ago this Subcommittee held a hearing on proposed changes to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, which governs our Nation's high-level radioactive waste disposal program. It was clear from that hearing that a number of changes would be very helpful in expediting the repository program and allowing the Federal government to fulfill its responsibilities under the Act. I am hopeful that, over the coming months, this Committee will approve legislation overhauling the Nuclear Waste Policy Act.

I am also hopeful that the Committee will move ahead with consideration of the Texas Compact. Since the 1980 Act was passed, 41 States have entered into regional compacts for the disposal of low-level wastes. The legislation before us today would grant Congressional consent to the 10th Compact, and allow Texas, Maine and Vermont to fulfill their responsibilities under the Low-Level Waste Policy Act.

Low-level wastes include a host of radioactive materials -- from medical wastes, to university research wastes, to the everyday protective gear used by workers at nuclear power plants. The vast majority of these wastes do not require the use of special containers to protect against threats to human health. In most cases, the radioactivity in these materials will decay to the point where there is no significant risk to human health after about 100 years.

Under the Low-Level Waste Policy Act, the responsibility of the Federal government is fairly limited. It is our responsibility to ensure that the compacts comply with the law, both in

providing the initial consent for compacts and in their implementation. That is our duty with the legislation before us. If the Compact complies with the law, it is our responsibility to quickly approve the compact and allow the States of Texas, Maine and Vermont to begin responsibly dealing with their low-level waste disposal needs.

I want to thank the Chairman for holding this important and appropriate hearing, and I look forward to moving ahead responsibly on H.R. 629.